

# Environmental Justice Needs Assessment

*building relationships, increasing capacity,  
and improving service delivery*



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# What are the issues?

- Rate Payer Equity - Who's benefiting from our programs and services
- One size fits all approach is not working
- Lack of trust - need to open communication channels
- 1990-2000 foreign born population doubled to 268,300, 15% of King County population
- Lesson learned can be applied to other communities and projects

# Potential Barriers

- What's the incentive
- How do you make decisions
- Who is allowed to speak for you
- What's the best way to communicate
- What are the taboos
- Sharing the power
- Use us and lose us



# Project Goals

- To establish and build reciprocal relationships with Community Based Organizations (CBOs), other local government organizations, and community participants to increase access to information and service.
- Jointly conduct a needs assessment to identify what the top environmental health needs and concerns are of immigrant and refugee communities.
- Identify service delivery strategies that work.

# Our approach

- Joint project planning process with community, CBOs, local government and nonprofit agency partners
- Reciprocal training with CBO's on conducting focus groups and surveys, Environmental Justice (EJ), HHW, water & energy conservation, indoor air pollution, contaminated fish consumption, and watersheds.
- Reciprocal cross-cultural adaptation





# What are we doing?

We're conducting focus groups, asking people questions at events and in their homes using questionnaires asking what their big environmental health problems are in their home and neighborhood.



# What are we doing?

We're offering information on improving indoor air quality, water and energy conservation, using non/less toxic products for home and garden, proper disposal of waste, recycling, watersheds and water quality, and other issues identified by the community.



# The Results

- We have established relationships of trust and credibility for EJNA as a "go-to" source of important HHW and other environmental health information.
- Jointly conducted focus groups and surveys with Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer/Cambodian, Samoan, Filipino, Somali, Eritrean, Spanish, Ethiopian, Oromo and Tegrinia residents living in Seattle and King County.
- Agency partners, CBO's and the communities have participated in over 100 hours of planning meetings and training.
- Provided translation and interpretation of messages in 8 languages (Vietnamese, Tagalong, Cantonese, Samoan, Somali, Amharic, Khmer, Oromo and Spanish)
- Increased partner cross-cultural competency.



# The Results

- Completed 400 hours of outreach and 800 surveys at area festivals.
- Conducted 420 home visits and surveys
- Distributed over 400 green home kits.
- Top areas of concern from the focus groups and surveys were: dirty tap water, second hand smoke, litter, proper use of cleaners and crime
- 50 hours of community presentations on HHW, EJ, watersheds, water quality, energy and water conservation, contaminated fish, indoor air pollution and weatherization.
- Field trips to Wasteshed, Transfer Station, Duwamish River.

# Lessons Learned

- Partner. Partner. Partner. You can't do it all. Build a strong and diverse base to increase flexibility and address community needs.
- Involve community members in the development of programs and messages in the twinkle stage.
- Once concerns have been identified, do what needs to get done to address issues affecting the community.
- Close the loop and pair information/presentations with field trips.
- Just because people are from the same ethnic group does not mean that they think & act alike
- When things seem stuck try and keep the cross cultural piece in mind.

# Our Project Partners

- International District Housing Alliance
- Horn of Africa
- Somali Community Services
- Asian Pacific Islander Women and Family Services  
Filipino community & Samoan community
- Pasefica
- Khmer Community of Seattle and King County
- Local Hazardous Waste Management Program
- Seattle-King County Public Health
- UW Center for Ecogenetics and Environmental Health
- Seattle City Light
- Environmental Coalition of South Seattle
- American Lung Association of Washington - MHE